

NATURAL DISTRIBUTION OF *Vitex altissima* IN SRI LANKA.

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Vitex altissima is one of the most important timber species in Sri Lanka. Traditionally timber of this species is used for construction of door and window frames. Historical records reveal, this is a widely distributed species in Sri Lanka found both in dry zone and wet zone. However due to over exploitation, this species has become somewhat rare in many parts of the country.

The NCR study shows the distribution of woody species in the country. It has a higher relative frequency in disturbed forests than in least disturbed forests. It is more common in peripheral areas of the forests. The NCR results revealed that *V. altissima* has a wide distribution range. The distribution range of *V. altissima* is from very dry monsoon forests to ever wet rain forests. However, it is not recorded in sub-montane or montane regions. This data shows *V. altissima* is not a rare species and it has a wide distribution in low country irrespective of rainfall. This information on ecological range of this species can be used in forest management.